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COMO



PARK

NEWS

A Saint Paul Neighborhood

Official Newsletter of the District 10 Como Community Council



Spring 2007

District 10 Proposes Mounted Patrol Facility

Last December the District 10 Board passed a resolution recommending support for activities to promote the relocation of the Saint Paul Police Department's mounted patrol facility to one of several suggested locations, one of which is Como Park. The facility site proposed is part of the Park Department's maintenance storage area just north of the dog pound and Humane Society.

Efforts to return the Mounted Patrol's home to Saint Paul grew out of discussions over the increasing number of events and attractions in the park and diminished funding for security, including elimination of the Park Ranger patrols. These issues, together with concerns regarding the previous summer's average of five car break-ins per week, inspired concerned neighbors to explore ways to increase police presence. Committee members decided to explore the possibility of sharing city resources as a way to benefit two city departments, Parks and Police.

A facility for the mounted patrol would require an initial investment of \$250,000–400,000, depending on site work and possible opportunities for a "green building." There are savings, though, in a shortened commute. On average, three officers, three horses, two trucks and two trailers drive an estimated 30–40 miles each day, with accompanying fuel, maintenance and vehicle repairs and depreciation. Officer time is another consideration. Approximately one to two hours per day are spent on transportation; travel time savings would average 30 hours/week, nearly a full time employee, time better spent policing our city than driving outside city limits.

The proposed facility, including the stable, small paddock, small office, community gathering space, and parking area would measure approximately 10,000 sq. ft. For comparison purposes, the lot for a typical single family home in Saint Paul is about 6,000 sq. ft. The horse barns at the State Fairgrounds are not suitable for year-round use and the University of Minnesota's Equine Center presents financial challenges, but neither option has been ruled out. Over the years, numerous locations for the facility have been considered and discarded. Senior Commander Gregory Pye, from the Saint Paul Police Department, compared the search for a site to "house hunting with both sets of in-laws," implying the difficulty satisfying everyone.

The Como proposal has drawn both opposition and support. Resident Nels Larsen and his family live in the Midway Parkway area. Nels "supports SPPD being allowed to move the horse stables to Como Park." He also feels "it would be great to have a stepped-up police presence in the park." Chloe Sterk is the great-grand daughter of Fredrick Nussbaumer, considered the "father" of the Saint Paul Parks system and the granddaughter and daughter of Adolph and Al Sterk, respectively, who worked as Assistant Park Superintendents. Ms. Sterk continues to live in the neighborhood and remembers when the horses were stabled at Como. She says "it would be wonderful to have the patrols get back to their old home in the park." Chief of Police John Harrington sent a letter of thanks for District 10's efforts to "begin a grassroots effort to establish a permanent home in Como Park for the Saint Paul Police Mounted Unit." District 6 Planning Council, our neighbor to the east, has sent a letter of support, and several members of their Land Use committee have agreed to work with District 10 on this proposal.

The Friends of the Park oppose the project citing Saint Paul's "no net loss" policy for parklands. The District 10 Land Use Committee contends that, as the facility would be part of a lease agreement between the Parks and Police Department, there is no loss. The "no net loss" policy also contains a clause authorizing the City Council to divert parkland "in the event it is determined to be in the best interests of the public." Some area residents are concerned that ever-increasing use of Como Park jeopardizes park sustainability. Como resident Sharon Shinomiya was quoted in a Pioneer Press article dated March 2, 2007, as stating "I worry that piece by piece the park is going to get smaller."

To learn more about this proposal, you may go to www.ComoPark.org, click on "Committees," then "Land Use." We'd like resident input on this, please email your comments to district10@comopark.org or phone 651-644-3889.

District 10 Calendar

UNLESS SPECIFIED, ALL MEETINGS HELD AT DISTRICT 10 OFFICE, HISTORIC STREETCAR STATION 1224 LEXINGTON PKWY. N.

Board Meetings

APRIL 17, 7:00 P.M.

MAY 15, 7:00 P.M.

Communications Committee:

MAY 2, 6:30 P.M.

JUNE 6, 6:30 P.M.

Environment Committee:

APRIL 26, 7:00 P.M.

MAY 24, 7:00 P.M.

Events & Institutions Comm:

MAY 8, 7:00 P.M.

JUNE 12, 7:00 P.M.

Executive Committee:

MAY 2, 7:30 P.M.

JUNE 6, 7:30 P.M.

Land Use Committee:

MAY 7, 7:00 P.M.

JUNE 4, 7:00 P.M.

Recycling is collected every Monday in District 10. Recycling should be at the curb by 7:00 A.M. as routes vary from week to week.

Call District 10 for more info on any of the meetings, 644-3889, or see our web site: ComoPark.org for last minute meeting changes as well as meetings/events not shown on this schedule due to time/space constraints.

THE COMO CURMUDGEON

That NASCAR Feeling

My wife and I have lived in the Como area for over a decade, and for the most part, we love it. We're just a couple of blocks from the park, which our dogs like as much as we do, and we dig the "urban forest" flavor of our block, along with its deep lots. There's even a hawk couple that's established an aerial domain nearby. Goodbye, crows! There's just one fly in our enjoyment ointment: We live on *Victoria Raceway*.

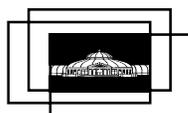
You may be familiar with this stretch of road; otherwise known as North Victoria Street, the *Raceway* is one of the main north-south routes through the Como area. Drivers blast up and down its length at dangerously high rates of speed while tailgating like there's no tomorrow, scream into and out of the curves near Victoria's intersection with Arlington, and wantonly disregard the intersection's stop signs. Each year at this time, when increasingly nice weather brings an increase not just in the number of vehicles but also pedestrians and cyclists going back and forth to Como Park, I grow increasingly concerned that there will be a very ugly crashes at or near this intersection.

My guess is that I'm not the only person around who thinks it's a minor miracle that serious car crashes on the *Raceway* have been rare, but that it's only a matter of time until the other shoe drops. (I just hope it doesn't drop while attached to some luckless pedestrian's foot.)

As far as I know, the last *Victoria Raceway* crash of any account occurred before we moved into the neighborhood. It involved a northbound car that blew through the stop signs at Arlington at about 45 mph, jumped the curb, crashed into a tree on the south lot line of what is now our property — and then plowed into the former owner's pickup truck, which had been parked in the driveway overnight. The car and the truck were totaled, but the driver of the car wasn't killed, and no one was in the truck, so thank God for small favors...

But like I said, this long streak of good luck has gotta end sooner or later. The question is, can the streak be intentionally extended by finding ways to curtail speed-addled drivers? I'm not a big believer in exhortations; the Pioneer Press campaign of putting out yard signs telling people to slow down was a ridiculous exercise in futility. No one, especially a manic motorist, is going to start behaving more responsibly just because someone asks them to.

Here's what I propose: Ramsey County should extend the median on Larpenteur Avenue so that it completely blocks the intersection where *Victoria Raceway* and Larpenteur meet. That way, people coming north on Victoria would not have the option of going west on Larpenteur, and people heading toward Victoria from east Larpenteur would not be able to turn down Victoria to go south. That would cut off a ton of non-neighborhood traffic.



Como Park Living at Home/ Block Nurse Program

1376 Hoyt Ave. W.,
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55108
Phone (651) 642-1127
E-mail: comobnp@mtn.org

Supportive Neighborhood Services for Seniors

Contact us for more information about:

- **Pet Wellness Check**
- **Circle of Friends Group**
A fun, supportive, and informational gathering for seniors. Meets the 1st and 3rd Friday of every month September to June at St. Timothy Lutheran Church.
- **Exercise/Enrichment Group**
Meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month at United Church of Christ in Falcon Heights.
- **The Gathering Respite Care Group**
Meets the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of every month at St. Timothy Lutheran Church in St. Paul.
- **Free Blood Pressure Screenings**
Meet our nurse at Blomberg Pharmacy the first Wednesday of each month at 11:00 A.M. to Noon.
- **Caregiver Support Group**
Meets the 2nd Thursday of every month.
- **Volunteer Transportation Service**
A 3 to 4 day notice is best.
- **Grief & Loss Support Group**

Please Call our Office for more information about all our programs and services. (651) 642-1127

The biggest practical impediment to this plan is that Victoria is officially designated a trunk road, whose primary purpose is to allow traffic from outside the area to pass through it with minimal traffic controls, there's not a snowball's chance that it would ever be closed off. Dang.

And even if the median were extended, the result of such a closure would be a manifold increase in Lexington Parkway traffic, significantly decreasing the tranquility and enjoyment of Como Park while increasing the chances that pedestrians and cyclists going back and forth to the park will be creamed by crazed, curve-addicted drivers.

Here's my other thought: I have a good-sized yard, so maybe I should offer to let the Saint Paul police set up their stables here. In exchange, they would agree to provide some traffic control/patrol hours on the *Raceway*. This would certainly be a public safety service, and I'm betting that the shock of seeing mounted cops trotting up and down the *Raceway* would have a calming effect on many drivers. If nothing else, maybe the horses' "calling cards" would cause drivers to slow down as they attempt to avoid smushing them. CC

Job Corp's NAC Expands

On March 8, 2006, the Job Corps Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) voted to change its name to the "Community Relations Council" (CRC). Resident outreach was done via 800 invitational flyers to area homes.

The change was made to better reflect committee objectives to broaden resident and business participation while serving as a liaison between the center and surrounding communities. An important part of Job Corps training program is job placement. Students finishing certification programs are hired by companies as diverse as student skills, the CRC seeks representation from companies able to help define workplace trends and needs in a changing market place.

Capital Improvement Budget Proposals

On March 20, as part of our monthly board meeting, board and community members ranked city-wide and area-specific Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) proposals. The CIB process involves the submission, by city staff, community, and civic organizations of possible bricks and mortar projects. CIB proposals are made bi-annually.

Each District Council is asked to rank city-wide projects high, medium or low. At our meeting, 45 persons cast ballots. The top three city-wide projects in District 10 were Lexington Bikeways and Bridges, Uninterrupted Power Supply System, and Safe Routes to School Program.

Local projects are ranked by number, #1 being the top. Area projects were ranked as follows: Como Outdoor Woodland Classroom, Victoria St. Reconstruction, SPPD Mounted Patrol Facility and the Como Aquatic Facility.

Odds and Ends (continued from back page)

- Homeowner applications for participation in the **Metro Paint-a-thon** are due May 11. Eligible homeowners must be 60-plus years old and own a single family home, there are also income guidelines. For more information or to download and application, see <http://www.gmcc.org/paint-a-thon>
- **Cafesjian's Carousel** is seeking volunteers for its eighth season, which begins May 1. Volunteers work 3-4 hour shifts two or more times per month. For information about volunteering please call 651-489-4628 or see www.ourfaircarousel.org
- The seventh annual **Neighborhood Garage Sale** will be held Saturday, May 19, from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Participation is free (a freewill donation to cover some of the costs is always, of course, appreciated). The District Council advertises the sale in several neighborhood newspapers and both daily papers. Flyers and maps are made available through the neighborhood and on the District 10 web site (www.ComoPark.org). For more details or to sign up, please call the office at 651-644-3889, fill out the Contact form on our website, or e-mail district10@comopark.org. Signup deadline is Wed., May 16, 5:00 P.M. This deadline gives us time to produce the maps, which will be available to download Friday evening.

Crime Watch Committee Seeks Participants

With access to a large regional park, a beautiful lake, and plentiful recreational opportunities, it is easy recognize District 10 as an excellent community in which to live, work, and play. The natural beauty of the Como neighborhood is enhanced by its proximity to the Como Zoo, the State Fairgrounds, the University of Minnesota's Saint Paul Campus, and a host of other community institutions and programs. Retail shops, historic railroad buildings, local businesses, faith community centers, and a number of community agencies are within walking distance of many of our homes. In fact, the District 10 area plays host to more than a million visitors each year.

With so many wonderful reasons to celebrate the place in which we live, residents have good reason to be proud to be part of the Como Park neighborhood. The Crime Watch Committee hopes to build upon that sense of community pride by identifying ideas and strategies for maintaining a safe and pleasant place to live. The Crime Watch Committee for District 10 is actively seeking participants. The Committee meets at the Historic Street Car Station from 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M. on the third Wednesday of each month. Please come and join the discussion about what you believe makes our Como neighborhood a wonderful place to live, and consider becoming an active participant in a committee that hopes to identify and address issues pertaining to community safety and crime prevention.

District 10 Crime Statistics from 2001 to 2005

| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Arson | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Agg. Assault | 14 | 8 | 13 | 7 | 9 |
| Res. Burglary | 114 | 103 | 105 | 89 | 108 |
| Homicide | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Car Theft | 69 | 45 | 46 | 41 | 58 |
| Narcotics | 4 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 4 |
| Rape | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 6 |
| Robbery | 5 | 6 | 10 | 2 | 6 |
| Theft | 591 | 318 | 392 | 426 | 381 |
| Vandalism | 14 | 103 | 105 | 100 | 103 |
| Calls for Service | 5,412 | 3,875 | 3,805 | 4,275 | 4,347 |

Statistics taken from the SPPD website, 2006 numbers not yet available.

See the Crime Watch Committee's section of our website for more information about meetings and activities.

Why Pay More?

- Buy with us & receive **\$750 cash back** after closing.
- Lived & worked in Como Park for the past 22 years.
- List your home with our low **4.25% listing fee**.
- Compare and Save! You'll **save thousands!**



| | CU Realty | 7% Brokers |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Price | \$250,000 | \$250,000 |
| List Fee | 4.25% | 7% |
| Commission | \$10,625 | \$17,500 |



Tim Tolaas, REALTOR®
(651) 787- 9572



Odds and Ends

- The 2007 **Como Neighborhood Garage Sale** will be held May 19 from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Participation and advertising are free. Please see page 3 and our website for more info.
- A **National Night Out** kickoff celebration will be held Wednesday, May 23, from 6 to 8 P.M. at the Como Park Picnic pavilions on Horton (across from the pool). Block Party forms and suggestions for activities will be available. Enjoy free hot dogs, live music, games and visits from Mayor Coleman and Chief Harrington.
- Eagle Scout candidate **Steve Williams**, BSA Troop 285, along with fellow scouts and adult leaders, spent well over 100 hours building 20 trail benches for the Science Center at the Maltby Nature Preserve. As part of his Eagle project, Steve did project planning, fund raising and volunteer organization. Congratulations!
- Como area 2006 Golden Bloom Award winners are **Philippe and Lynn Gallandat** with a Golden designation for Art in the Garden and **Tim Finnegan** for the residential Silver Bloom award.
- The **Como Conservatory's** Spring Flower Show, featuring tulips, hydrangeas, peonies and lilies, will run through April 29. The Conservatory is open everyday, including holidays, from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. from March 31 through Sept. 30.

See pg. 3 for more odds 'n ends...



DISTRICT 10

Como Community Council

1224 Lexington Pkwy. N.
 Saint Paul, MN 55103

www.ComoPark.org
 (651) 644-3889

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